

Comic Life

quick TUTORIAL

for Macs

Creating a comic page in Comic Life is very simple – the user interface is arranged in an easy to understand way. A comic can be made in a few simple steps, but Comic Life is still a feature-rich application.

1. Select a Template

A template is a particular layout of panels on a page. The templates are smart in that the layout is automatically adjusted to suit the dimensions of your page.

The template area is on the right side of the window. Use the pull-down menu to view the different template collections. When you decide on the template you would like to use, drag it onto the page or simply double-click it. The template will adjust to fit the page within the margins. The template area collapses and the photo library expands upward.

2. Add and Manipulate Images



If there are pictures in the iPhoto Library, you'll see them displayed in the image pane when the "iPhotos" button is selected at the bottom of the pane. If there are no photos in iPhoto, the home directory of the computer will be displayed. Clicking on the "Finder" button will also display the home folder, so if your pictures are on the Desktop you can find them here. The "Capture" button can also be used when a video camera is attached to the computer.

Click and drag an image from the image pane over to the panel you wish it to appear in. Comic Life will fit the image to the panel so that it fills it completely. You can adjust the position of the image by clicking and dragging it, and you can resize it by dragging the green 'handles' that surround the image.

When an image is dropped into a panel it becomes a part of it. When the panel is moved, the image will move with it. To select only the image again, double-click on the image within the panel. The image is editable again.

Click "Details" in the upper right pane to change the attributes and styles of the images and frames. Click once to edit the frame and double-click to edit the photo. There is a wide variety of templates and styles to choose from.



3. Add Balloons

Once your images are positioned the way you want them, it's time to add balloons. Drag a balloon from the pane at the bottom of your window and drop it onto a panel. The sample text within the balloon is highlighted and ready for you to type. Enter your text and then click outside the text area to set the text in the balloon.



The balloon resizes itself to fit the new text, but it doesn't always look exactly right. You can resize the balloon by clicking on it once to display the green handles. Stretch, enlarge and move the balloon with the green handles.

In addition to the green handles, you'll see a blue dot at the tip of the tail. Click and drag the dot to place the tail next to the speaker's mouth. When you click on the balloon and move it, you will see that only the balloon moves – the tail tip remains anchored where you placed it. To move the balloon AND the tail, click on the green dot with arrows and drag to the new position.



If more than one character is speaking, you can create additional tails by clicking the orange + sign icon.

If your character has even more to say, you can add an extension balloon to your original balloon. To do this, click and drag the "Extend" balloon from the bottom pane to your existing balloon.



4. Add Captions and Lettering

To add even more interest to your comic you can add lettering elements. The rectangular box in the balloon panel is for captions or titles when a character isn't speaking.

POW! BAM! KAZOWEE!

(Remember Batman?!). To add a lettering element, drag and drop the lettering element onto your comic page. A window appears for you to enter the text you want. You may also open the Font palette from here to change the font. Click "Place Lettering" when you are done. You can move the object by clicking and dragging, but the blue handles work differently than the green handles. They don't maintain the proportions of the object like on the images and balloons; they distort the lettering object. The center handles allow you to rotate the lettering.

The default style is what you see above: a gradient fill of yellow to red with a black and white outline. To change the look of your lettering click on the "Details" button on the top of the right pane. There are many built-in styles in the pull-down menu or you can create your own style. The possibilities are endless!

HAVE FUN!